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Note: Author doesn't realize that Gojri (Gujuri) is not a dardic language but an immigrant group from the plains

# Some Less Known Dialects Of 'Kohistan'

Acc No. 112

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'Kohistān' literally means a 'mountainous region' and, as such, more than one areas in Pakistan are known by this general name of 'Kohistān'. The hilly tract extending from Karachi northward up to Sehwan is called 'Kohistān' by the people of Sind. Again the mountainous region covering the western part of the Hazara district extending northwards along the Indus as well as west-wards across Swat towards Dir and Chitral is all 'Kohistān'. Of this area, the region extending along the Indus is called the 'Indus Kohistān', while the country around the Upper Swat Valley of Kalām may conveniently be called as 'Swat Kohistān'. In this paper I will refer to the dialects of 'Swat Kohistān', which are comparatively less known among the dialects of Kohistān.

The writer does not claim an intimate knowledge of the dialects of 'Swat Kohistān', but by this introductory paper proposes to invite attention of our learned scholars to the great need of studying the languages of this country. Arabic and Persian, being the repositories of the common cultural heritage of Pakistan, would continue to be studied by the Pakistani scholars. But the languages spoken by our own people, being the primary media for expressing their thoughts and feelings, provide the basis for our rich cultural variety and the very foundation of our national literature. Of these languages, the less known dialects need our special attention because of their philological and anthropological importance and also because of their importance in the local folklore and literature.

*Literary Importance*

The speeches of Kohistān are important both from philological as well as literary point of view. If some local scholar

undertakes to collect folk poems composed in these tongues, his efforts will be amply rewarded. The early romance of Amān Malūk of Kishkār with Khush Begum and the love poems composed by Amān Malūk, seem to have started almost a chain reaction through Kohistān and, since then, a number of actual love stories have provided interesting topics for verbal tales as well as inspiring themes for poetry. Indeed, Swat Kohistān could as well be described as the 'land of lovers', and almost every lover was a poet in the bargain. I will quote some verses from *Turvali* and *Kalāmī* to illustrate the poetic genius of these mountain bards, which is so realistic and true to life.

(a) *Verses from Turvali* : Poet Lal yarned to meet his lady love 'Parvāshā', cried for her, and traversed long jungle tracks to seek the blessings of the Saint Pir Baba at Buner, but without any results. Says he in one of his poems :

میں آپن گے ڈلجو گے سوڈ دگ خلیگا

تیز چیلا میں چھینو، پیدا نا پڈ اروشا

I made a long robe for myself to strut about in it
( intoxicated with love )
It was all torn to pieces in bushes, yet I could n't
meet Parvāshā.

(b) *Verses from Kalāmī* : About the nature of love, poet Dādor Khān says :

دیدا شیخانے آے وڑیا لگ

مئے آج دیدن ملے ار لیدا

Other lovers rather got it (love) cheap
But I ca'nt even see my friend although I pay the price.

The same poet describes how his beloved is being strictly guarded. Even the door of the house is being kept locked by the mechanism of striking fast a nail from outside the door.

دَرویٹ مالک ڈوکُوت، لہ چھورن ہار کے
شُہدے مَیں لے مَتَرے ہَتے تا

He strikes the nail from outside the door to bar exit :
The poor rival has kept my beloved safe from me.

*The Less Known Kohistānī Dialects*

The northern region of Pakistan extending over 'Gilgit and Kashmir, the Indus and Swat Kohistāns, Chitral and Kafiristan' has been known throughout the long past as 'Dardistan', and hence the languages spoken in this extensive region were called by the general name of 'Dardic Languages' when they were studied for the first time under the *Linguistic Survey of India* directed by G. A. Grierson during the first quarter of this century. Grierson classified these 'Dardic' languages into three main groups, viz. the '*Kāfir*, the *Kho-wār*, and the *Dard*. According to this classification *Shina* ( the language of Gilgit ), *Kashmiri* and *Kohistānī* form the Dard Group.[1] '*Kohistānī*' has been described as "the original language of the Indus and Swat Kohistan" which is now divided into "several dialects". In the Swat Kohistān it is "now spoken only by Pashtu".[2] Of its "several dialects" only *Garwi*, *Torwali*, *Chilis*, and *Maiyān* have been mentioned and described in the Survey ( vol. VIII, Part-II ).

Beside the above four main dialects, the remaining Kohistānī dialects have not been studied so far. Here is a challenge to the students of philology and linguistics in our country. These several' Kohistānī speeches present a kaleidoscopic pattern so ar as their geographical distribution is concerned. Although some the contiguous dialects are mutually intelligible to their neigh- uring speakers, it appears as if due to physical or social riers from the time of their early settlements, the people of h isolated valley or a group of contiguous valleys came serve and develop the peculiarities of their

Of these 'several'

attempted to study particularly the *Gujro*, and also became partly acquainted with *Kalāmī*. The geographical position of these two and some other dialects which are distributed along the Upper Swat Valley is being briefly described here. It may, however, be pointed that *Pashtu* is the *lingua franca* of Swat Kohistān.

(1) *Turvālī*. The area of Turvālī begins from the town of Madāin ( Swat State ), extending northward on both sides of the Swat river to midway between Mankhiāl village and the small Isret river which falls into the Swat river on the right hand side. Thus, starting from Madāin, the town of Bahrain and many other villages such as Kedam, Garrhai, Cham, Kala-Lai and Mankhiāl as well as the adjacent neighbourhoods on both sides of the Swat river speak *Turvālī*.

(2) *Gujro*. *Gujro* is the language of the Pishmāl Valley which is sandwiched between the Isret and the Kāran Dukhī—the two small tributaries of the Swat river on the right hand side. Pishmāl valley is almost entirely inhabited by the Gujars who speak *Gujro*. Gujars scattered elsewhere on the mountain slopes flanking the Swat river, also speak *Gujro*, but the Pishmāl valley is the home area of *Gujro*.

(3) *Kālāmi*. Kālām valley which is the heart of Kohistān, is the main area of the Kālāmī language. It is also spoken, along with Pashtu on the left hand side of the Swat river-opposite to the Pishmal valley.

(4) *Thal-Lamtī*. This language takes its name from Thal which is the main town of the Dir State. It is also known as Dir-wali. It is spoken along the western part of 'Swat-Kohistān'.

(5) *Khandia*. It is the language of the Eastern part of 'Swat-Kohistān'. The Baaten mountain divides the *Khandia* speaking population from the Kishkārī area.

*Philological Importance*

In absence of any systematic studies subsequent to the completion of the *Linguistic Survey of India*, conclusions arrived at by Grierson, regarding the nature and origin, philology and grammar of these Dardic languages and dialects, are of basic

importance for any further study of the subject. Grierson made it clear that 'Dardic' was only a general name which was being extended, for the sake of convenience, to all the *Aryan* languages spoken in the region of Dardistan.[1] On the basis of philological evidence, Grierson pointed that there was an unmistakable philological link between Sindhi, Lahnda and the Dardic languages.[2] This conclusion of Grierson has hardly been modified or advanced by later research. It is necessary that we may explore further the nature of this philological link, mainly to determine whether *Sindhi* and *Lahnda* are derived from Sanskrit or they have developed along with the Dardic languages, independently as a distinct '*Indus Valley Group*'.

Grierson supported his view regarding an early philological link between Sindhi and Lahnda on the one hand the Dardic languages on the other, by pointing out their common characteristics of retaining '*t*' in the past-tense and '*l*' in the past-participle. For instance, from the verb 'to drink' the past tense in Sindhi will be *pito* (he drank), and in Lahnda (as well as in Panjabi which is influenced by Lahnda) it will be *pita*. Some other examples in Sindhi are *warto* (he got), *sarto* (he became satisfied), *parto* (he made up the differences or he was entrusted to) etc. Similar examples in Lahnda and Panjabi are *sita* (he sew), *kita* (he did) etc. It may also be pointed that in the *Gujrb* dialect of Pishmāl valley, we find the same *t* preserved in past tense. For instance, from the verb *di-ana* or *di-na* (to give), past-tense will be *di-th*. Now the one typical peculiarity of Dardic is that the letter *t* when it comes between two vowels is not elided, but is kept without change. In all the Indo-Aryan languages and Indian Prakrits such a *t* first became *d* and then disappeared. For example in Hindi-Urdu, we have these past tenses as *piya* (he drank), *kiya* (he did) etc. Again, the past-participle in the Dardic languages, e. g. in the *Maiyān* dialect of Kohistān and also occasionally in *Shina* language of Gilgit, retains 'l'. Thus in *Maiyan*, past-participle

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. I, part I, pp. 139-40.

from the verb '*kut*' (strike) will be '*kut-ag-il*' (struck). In Sindhi also we find every past-participle ending invariably in Ill e.g. *pi-tal* (drunk), *ka-yal* (done), *mar-iy-al* (struck or killed) etc. Although this 'l' exists in the outer Indo-Aryan languages "we do not find anything like this in the inner sub-branch of the Indo-Aryan languages".[1]

Apart from these typical philological similarities pointed out by Grierson, we find some very close linguistic similarities between Sindhi and some of these Dardic dialects of 'Swat Kohistan'. For instance, there is a striking resemblance between some prepositions of Sindhi and Turvali. In Turvali, we have '*tu chi*' ( تو چی ) which in old Sindhi is *to ji* ( تو جی ) meaning 'yours'. In Turvali, we will say '*Pir Baba gay*' ( پیر بابا گے ) which in Sindhi will be '*Pir Baba Khay*' ( پیر بابا کھے ), meaning 'to Pir Baba' ( Urdu : پیر بابا کو ).

Between Sindhi and Gujro, there is surprisingly such a close resemblance both in terminology and sentence structure that it appears as if Gujro is just another dialect of Sindhi. The following common characteristics are typical :—

(a) Both in Sindhi and Gujro, infinitives end in *n* or *nn* and are followed by small vowels but not by a long vowel as we have in Hindi or Urdu.

| *English* | *Sindhi* | *Gujro* | *Urdu* |
|---|---|---|---|
| To do | ka-ra-nnu ( ڪَرڻُ ) | ka-ra-na ( ڪَرَڻَ ) | karnā ( کرنا ) |
| To drink | pi-ya-nnu ( پِيڻُ ) | pi-na ( پِيڻَ ) | pinā ( پینا ) |
| To give | di-ya-nnu ( ڏِيڻُ ) | di-na, or di-a-na ( ڏِيڻَ، ڏِيئَڻَ ) | denā ( دینا ) |

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 139-40.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| To sit | we-ha-nnu ( ويهَنُ ) | be-sa-na ( بيسَنَ ) | baithnā ( ٻيٺهڻا ) |

(b) Both in Sindhi and Gujro, words signifying masculine gender end in *o* ( و ), while those denoting feminine gender end in *ee* ( ي ).

| *English* | *Sindhi* | *Gujro* |
|---|---|---|
| a horse | ghorro ( گهوڙو ) | ghorro ( گهوڙو ) |
| a mare | ghorree ( گهوڙي ) | ghorree ( گهوڙي ) |
| a dog | kuto ( ڪُتو ) | kuto ( ڪُتو ) |
| a bitch | kutee ( ڪُتي ) | kutee ( ڪُتي ) |
| a he-cat | bilo ( ٻِلو ) | bilo ( ٻِلو ) |
| a she-cat | bilee ( ٻِلي ) | bilee ( ٻِلي ) |
| a rupee | rupayo ( روپيو ) | rupayo ( روپيو ) |
| a roof | kottho ( ڪوٺهو ) | kottho ( ڪوٺهو ) |
| a thick eye-brow | bhiroonto ( ٻِهرونٽو ) | bhiroonto ( ٻُهرونٽو ) |
| the inside of the house | dero ( ديرو ) | dero ( ديرو ) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| a person | janno<br>( جنُو ) | jano<br>( جنو ) |
| a cat | manjo<br>( منجو ) | manjo<br>( منجو ) |

(c) There is also a close resemblance between the names of the numerals. It is particularly noteworthy that both Sindhi and Gujro have retained *r* ( ر ) in *sorahn* ( sixteen ) which has changed into '1' in other languages ( e. g. *solah* in Hindi-Urdu ).

| *English* | *Sindhi* | *Gujro* |
|---|---|---|
| one | hiku<br>( هِڪُ ) | eka<br>( ايڪَ ) |
| two | ba<br>( بَه ) | do<br>( دو ) |
| three | tre<br>( ٽُرے ) | trai<br>( ٽُرَئے ) |
| four | chār<br>( چار ) | chār<br>( چار ) |
| five | panja<br>( پنج ) | panja<br>( پَنْجَ ) |
| six | chhiaha/chha<br>( چِهَه چَهَه ) | chhiha<br>( چِهَه ) |
| seven | sat-ta<br>( سَتَ ) | sat-ta<br>( سَتَ ) |
| eight | attha<br>( اَٹهَ ) | attha<br>( اَٹهَ ) |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| nine | navan/naon<br>( نَوَنْ، نَئْن ) | naon<br>( نَوُنْ ) |
| ten | daha<br>( ڈَہ ) | daha<br>( دَہ ) |
| eleven | yarahn<br>( یارَہْن ) | yā-rahn<br>( یارھن ) |
| twelve | bārahn<br>( بارَہْن ) | bā-rahn<br>( بارَھن ) |
| thirteen | te-rahn<br>( تیرَہْن ) | te-rahn<br>( تیرھن ) |
| fourteen | cho-dhan<br>( چوڈَھن ) | chao-dhan<br>( چَوڈھن ) |
| fifteen | pand-rahn<br>( پندرَہْن ) | pand-rahn<br>( پندرھن ) |
| sixteen | sorahn<br>( سورَہْن ) | so-rahn<br>( سورھن ) |
| seventeen | sat-rahn<br>( ستَرَہْن ) | satā-rahn<br>( ستارھن ) |
| eighteen | ar-rrahn<br>( اَرڑَہْن ) | atthā-rahn<br>( اَٹھارھن ) |
| nineteen | conneeh<br>( اونیٹھ ) | uneeh<br>( اُنیٹھ ) |
| twenty | weeh<br>( ویہ ) | beeh<br>( بیہ ) |

(d) Both Sindhi and Gujro have the same sentence structure and almost the same terminology. The following are the typical examples of some of the phrases and sentences in the two languages.

| *English* | *Sindhi* | *Gujro* |
|---|---|---|
| good condition | changu hālu<br>( چنگو حالُ ) | chango hal<br>( چنگو حال ) |
| I saw | moon dithho<br>( مُون ڏِٺھو ) | men dittho<br>( مين ڏِٺھو ) |
| I had seen you somewhere | moon tokhay kithhe ditho ho<br>( مون توکھے کٿھے ڏِٺو هو ) | men to kithhe ditho thho<br>( مين توکٿھے ڏِٺھو ٿھو ) |
| rupee is in the box | rupayo sandooq men piyo ahey<br>( رپيو صندوق ۾ پيو آهي ) | rupayō sandooq mān piyō<br>( رپيو صندوق ماں پيو هئے ) |
| you may tie the string | dhago badhi jān<br>( دهاگو بَڌهجانْ ) | dhago badhe jan<br>( دهاگو بَڌهيجان ) |

Beside the above similarities, there are many nouns which are common in the terminologies of Sindhi and Gujro ( e. g. *meenhun* ( مِينهُنْ )=rain ; *kandhi* ( ڪَنڌهي ) in Sindhi and *kandh* ( ڪنڌ ) in Gujro=wall ; *seem* ( سيم )=a piece of pasture ).

This very close philological relationship between Sindhi and the Dardic dialect Gujro suggests a common historical background of their development. Grierson does not recognise that

either Sindhi or Lahnda is derived from any Dardic language but admits the foreign Dardic influence on these languages.[1] It may be pointed out that in view of the philological and phonetic peculiarities of Sindhi, its geographical isolation, its distance from the Sanskrit orbit of influence, and the continuous subjection of the lower Indus Valley to the political influence and population migrations from the West rather than from the East, it is yet to be established whether Sindhi is derived directly and only from Sanskrit.[2] The distinct nature of Sindhi, Lahnda, and the Dardic languages (of Kashmir, Kohistān and Gilgit) rather suggest that they owe their origin to the common stock of Aryan tongues spoken at the time of early Aryan settlements all along the Indus Valley. It has already been accepted that *Paisachi*, the mother of the Dardic languages, "was a very ancient language, a sister, and not a daughter of the form of speech which ultimately developed as literary Sanskrit."[3] Sanskrit developed later on after the Aryans had left behind their early settlments on the Indus, and migrated eastward and began a new phase of their settled life. There, from the common stock of the "Indus Valley Languages" of the Aryans, originated and developed Sanskrit which, influenced the *Indus Valley languages* (Sindhi, Lahnda, Kashmiri ect.) in later times, mainly through some form of Pali Prakrit. However despite this influence, these languages have preserved their early group-affinity and also their philological phonetic originality to the present times.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 141, ft.n. 1

[2] This subject has been discussed in details by the writer in a monograph on "*A Brief History of Sindhi Language*", the *Tuhfa-e-Larkana*, Hyderabad, 1962.

[3] Cf. Grierson: *Linguistic Survey of India*, vol. viii, part-ii, pp. 3-4.